

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LAGOS 04559 01 OF 02 242110Z
ACTION SS-25

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O 241845Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 675
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
MAMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 219

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 4559

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CG
SUBJECT: YOUR MESSAGE TO FOREIGN MINISTER GARBA

REF: STATE 092262

1. SUMMARY. GARBA PLANS TO FLY TO KINSHASA TUESDAY, APRIL 26 TO SEE MOBUTU. HE WILL VISIT LUANDA AS SOON AS NETO RETURNS FROM EASTERN EUROPE. HE SHARES US VIEW OF CONTINUING IMPORTANCE OF NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AND BELIEVES MOBUTU SHOULD NOT FIND NETO'S PRECONDITIONS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT. HE FEARS, HOWEVER, THAT MOBUTU WILL BE RELUCTANT TO NEGOTIATE BECAUSE OF HIS DESIRE TO DEFEAT KATANGANS FIRST. GARBA SEES MERIT IN AN EVENTUAL OAU-SPONSORED BORDER PATROL, POSSIBLY UNDER NIGERIAN COMMAND. NETO WAS NONCOMMITTAL WHEN GARBA TOLD HIM OF US WILLINGNESS DISCUSS US/ANGOLAN NORMALIZATION; GARBA WILL TRY TO GET MORE OUT OF NETOON THIS NEXT TIME AROUND. GARBA ASKED WHETHER I COULD BRIEF HIM TUESDAY MORNING ON UP-TO-DATE STATUS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 LAGOS 04559 01 OF 02 242110Z

OF SITUATION IN SHABA AND CABINDA. END SUMMARY.

2. I DELIVERED YOUR LETTER TO GARBA THIS MORNING AT HIS HOME, AND WE DISCUSSED ANGOLA-ZAIRE PROBLEM AT SOME LENGTH. GARBA SAID HE WAS MOST APPRECIATIVE OF YOUR MESSAGE, TERMED IT "VERY KIND," AND SAID HE SHARED US VIEW OF IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED EFFORTS FOR NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

3. GARBA SAID FURTHER PROGRESS WITH THE NIGERIAN MEDIATION INITIATIVE HAD BEEN TEMPORARILY DELAYED BY NETO'S CURRENT TRIP TO EASTERN EUROPE AND BY NGUZA'S ABSENCE FROM ZAIRE. ACCORDING TO GARBA, NGUZA'S DIRECTUEUR DE CABINET DIDN'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO ASK MOBUTU TO SEE GARBA WHEN NGUZA WAS NOT AROUND, SO GARBA HAD TO WAIT UNTIL NGUZA GOT BACK TO KINSHASA ON MONDAY. GARBA SAID THE FMG HAD HIGH REGARD FOR NGUZA AND HE WAS SURE HE COULD COUNT ON NGUZA'S ARRANGING FOR HIM TO SEE MOBUTU WEDNESDAY. "NO MATTER WHEN YOU GET THERE, MOBUTU ALWAYS WANTS TO HAVE BREAKFAST WITH YOU THE NEXT MORNING." GARBA WOULD VISIT LUANDA AS SOON AS IT COULD BE ARRANGED FOLLOWING NETO'S RETURN TO LUANDA, WHICH HE THOUGHT MIGHT BE IN ABOUT A WEEK.

4. GARBA WAS SURPRISED THAT NETO COULD BE AWAY FORM HOME AT A TIME LIKE THIS, WITH A KATANGAN DEFEAT IN PROSPECT. HE SUGGESTED NETO MAY HAVE WANTED TO SHOW THAT HE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH SHABA DEVELOPMENTS.

5. GARBA HESITATED TO PREDICT HOW MOBUTU WILL RESPOND WHEN GARBA GIVES HIM THE OFFICIAL ANGOLAN ANSWER TO THE FMG'S GOOD-OFFICES OFFER. GARBA THOUGHT MOBUTU SHOULD HAVE NO PARTICULAR DIFFICULTY WITH NETO'S TWO "PRECONDITIONS," I.E., THAT MOBUTU GUARANTEE PEACEFUL BORDERS WITH ANGOLA (INCLUDING CABINDA) AND THAT HE RETURN FIXED ASSETS ALLEGEDLY BELONGING TO ANGOLA. IN FACT, MOBUTU HAD ALREADY ACCEPTED THESE CONDITIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, GARBA EXPECTED MOBUTU MIGHT WISH TO ELIMINATE THE KATANGANS BEFORE SITTING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 LAGOS 04559 01 OF 02 242110Z

DOWN TO NEGOTIATE WITH NETO. HIS SUCCESSES ON THE GROUND MIGHT MAKE HIM MORE INTRANSIGENT. IN WHAT SEEMED LIKE AN UNGUARDED COMMENT, GARBA THEN SAID HE THOUGHT MOBUTU SHOULDN'T HAVE TOO MUCH TROUBLE NOW WIPING OUT THE KATANGANS AND IN FACT HE HOPED MOBUTU WOULD DO IT.

COMMENT: IT IS NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR WHETHER NETO'S "PRECONDITIONS MUST BE ACCEPTED BY MOBUTU AS A PREREQUISITE TO ANGOLAN AGREEMENT TO NEGOTIATE, OR WHETHER THEY REPRESENT THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE NETO WISHES TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. WE THINK THE LATTER INTERPRETATION IS THE MORE LIKELY.

6. GARBA SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO "THIS ROUND." HE HAD BEEN EMBARRASSED BY NOT HAVING MUCH TO TELL NIGERIANS AND FOREIGNERS WHO HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY PRESSING TO KNOW THE RESULTS OF NIGERIA'S INITIATIVE. NOW HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO GET DOWN TO MORE SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS. ANGOLANS HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN VERY DIFFICULT TO TALK WITH. THEY HAD "SPOUTED A LOT OF NONSENSE." NETO HIMSELF HAD SEEMED

DIFFIDENT AND INSECURE. LATELY, HOWEVER, NETO HAD SEEMED MORE CONFIDENT.

7. GARBA SAID THE ANGOLANS HAD A "SENTIMENTAL PROBLEM" WITH REGARD TO ZAIRE. HE DEFINED THE PROBLEM AS A KIND OF TESTED ANGOLAN INTEREST IN MAINTAINING AN ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, SUGGESTING THAT HARMONIZED RELATIONS MIGHT BE A POLITICAL LIABILITY TO NETO AND HIS SUPPORTERS IN THE LUANDA REGIME. OBASANJO HAD TAKEN A "VERY HARD LINE" WITH THE ANGOLAN DEFENSE MINISTER WHO HEADED THE ANGOLAN MISSION TO LAGOS, INFORMING HIM IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT NIGERIA WANTED A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. THE DEFENSE MINISTER HAD SAID HE WISHED OBASANJO WOULD MAKE THE SAME PITCH TO THE POLITBURO IN LUANDA.

8. I ASKED GARBA ABOUT NETO'S VIEW OF US ATTITUDES TOWARD NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA. GARBA SAID HE HAD RAISED
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 LAGOS 04559 01 OF 02 242110Z

THE MATTER ALONG THE LINES YOU HAD AUTHORIZED, AND THAT NETO HAD SAID NOTHING. HE WOULD HOPE TO GET MORE OUT OF NETO THIS TIME AROUND, AND HE THOUGHT THE NORMALIZATION POSSIBILITY SHOULD BE A FACTOR ENCOURAGING NETO TO TAKE A POSITIVE APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH MOBUTU. GARBA EXPRESSED SPECIAL PLEASURE AT REITERATION IN YOUR MESSAGE OF US STANCE WITH REGARD TO NORMALIZATION.

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 04559 02 OF 02 242119Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 241845Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 LAGOS 4559

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

HE AGREED THAT NETO OUGHT TO SEE BENEFIT IN FOLLOWING SUCH A PATH, SINCE WIND WOULD BE TAKEN FROM UNITA SAILS ONCE MPLA AND USG STARTED TALKING TOGETHER AGAIN. ELEMENTS IN NETO'S REGIME THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE OBJECT TO NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH THE US MIGHT SEE ADDITIONAL QUID PRO QUO POSSIBILITY OF WORKING THROUGH THE US TO PRESS SOUTH AFRICA TO CEASE AND DESIST ASSISTING UNITA.

9. GARBA SAID HE WAS GIVING SERIOUS THOUGHT TO THE MERITS OF AN OAU BORDER-POLICE FORCE AS ONE OF THE MAJOR ELEMENTS IN A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. HE HAD HIMSELF BEEN A MEMBER OF THE UN'S INDIA-PAKISTAN PATROL, AND HE THOUGHT A SIMILAR KIND OF ARRANGEMENT MIGHT WORK IN ASSURING PEACEFUL BORDERS BETWEEN ANGOLA (INCLUDING CABINDA) AND ZAIRE. GARBA THOUGHT POLICING TROOPS SHOULD BE STATIONED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDERS, PERHAPS EXCHANGING SIDES FROM TIME TO TIME AS IN THE INDIA-PAKISTAN CASE. NETO NEEDED TO BE ASSURED AGAINST CONTINUING ATTACKS FROM FLEC AND FNLA. WHEN I ASKED ABOUT MOBUTU'S NEED

SECRET

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PAGE 02 LAGOS 04559 02 OF 02 242119Z

FOR SIMILAR PROTECTION AGAINST KATANGANS OPERATING FROM ANGOLAN SANCTUARIES, GARBA ADMITTED HE HADN'T CONSIDERED THAT ASPECT OF THE MATTER SO SERIOUSLY BECAUSE HE ANTICIPATED MOBUTU WOULD ELIMINATE THE KATANGAN THREAT. THE REAL PROBLEM WOULD BE THE FLEC, WHICH MOBUTU DID NOT CONTROL. AS FOR FNLA CAMPS, MOBUTU CLAIMED TO HAVE CLOSED THEM ALL DOWN. WHAT THE ANGOLANS NOW BELIEVE TO BE FNLA CAMPS ARE ACTUALLY ZAIRIAN ARMY BASES. THE POLICE FORCE WOULD NONETHELESS HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL FNLA OPERATIONS CEASED.

10. GARBA SAID THAT ETEKI WAS TO HAVE COME TO LAGOS AFTER HIS TALKS IN LUANDA BUT INSTEAD RETURNED TO ADDIS BY WAY OF LUSAKA. THUS THE FMG DOES NOT KNOW THE OUTCOME OF ETEKI'S MEETINGS WITH THE ANGOLANS NOR THE POSSIBLE ATTITUDE OF THE OAU TO A POLICE-FORCE PROPOSAL. GARBA THOUGHT SUCH A FORCE SHOULD BE COMPOSED SOLELY OF AFRICAN CONTINGENTS ACCEPTABLE BOTH TO MOBUTU AND NETO. EGYPT AND SUDAN, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO NETO WHEREAS LIBYA OR BENIN WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO MOBUTU. POSSIBLE CANDIDATES MIGHT BE SUCH COUNTRIES AS GHANA, LEBERIA, KENYA, TUNISIA, TOGO, OR EVEN GUINEA (WHICH HAD SURPRISINGLY GOOD RELATIONS WITH SOME "CONSERVATIVE" FRANCOPHONE STATES AND HAD NOT TAKEN SIDES IN THE CURRENT

ZAIRE/ANGOLAN CRISIS). TANZANIA WOULD PROBABLY BE UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE GIVEN THE TROOP COMMITMENT ALREADY MADE TO ASSIST MOZAMBIQUE. ETHIOPIA, IN THE PAST A USEFUL CONTRIBUTOR TO SUCH VENTURES, WOULD BE OUT BY VIRTUE OF CURRENT INTERNAL CHAOS. GARBA THOUGHT NIGERIA MIGHT BE CALLED UPON TO RUN THE OPERATION AND THUS PROVIDE OFFICERS BUT NOT TROOPS. AS A POSSIBLE PRECEDENT FOR A LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR NIGERIA (ALTHOUGH WITH OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES), GARBA CITED NIGERIA'S RESPONSIBILITY AS THE "GUARANTOR" OF THE RECENT TOGO/BENIN ACCORD.

11. IF THE OAU POLICE FORCE WERE TO GET OFF THE GROUND, GARBA THOUGHT THE US MIGHT BE ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 LAGOS 04559 02 OF 02 242119Z

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT, PRIMARILY JEEPS AND RADIO EQUIPMENT. HE THOUGHT THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE AIRLIFTED TO THEIR LOCATIONS.

12. GARBA WXPRESSED CONCERN REGARDING EXTENT AND ACCURACY OF FMG'S INFORMATION BASE CONCERNING ANGOLA/ZAIRE PROBLEM. WHEREAS FMG HAD REASONABLE CONFIDENCE IN INFORMATION PROVIDED BY AMBASSADOR ENAHORO IN KINSHASA AND APPRECIATED NGUZA'S CANDOR, INFORMATION FROM LUANDA WAS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. FOR ONE THIN, COMMUNICATION TO LAGOS FROM AMBASSADOR MUSA HAD TO BE RELAYED FROM THE NIGERIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON. GARBA SAID HE WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE AN UP-TO-DATE BRIEFING FROM ME JUST PRIOR TO HIS PLANNED DEPARTURE FOR KINSHASA ON TUESDAY. HE ASKED WHETHER I COULD PRESENT HIM SUCH A BRIEFING FIRST THING TUESDAY MORNING. HE HOPED IT COULD COVER SUCH SUBJECTS AS THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SHABA, EVIDENCE OF CUBAN PARTICIPATION, ROLES OF MOROCCANS AND OTHER FOREIGN HELPERS, SITUATION IN CABINDA, ACTIVITIES OF FLEC AND MOBUTU INFLUENCE WITH FLEC, ETC.

13. COMMENT: WHEREAS SITREPS BEING RECEIVED FROM DEPARTMENT AND KINSHASA MOST USEFUL IN KEEPING US ON TOP OF FAST-MOVING SITUATION IN SHABA, WE WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S AUTHORIZATION TO DELIVER SPECIALLY TARGETED BRIEFING TO GARBA TUESDAY MORNING AS HE HAS REQUESTED.

14. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS AS DESIRED TO OTHER INTERESTED POSTS.
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Message Attributes

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